

Marriage Problems—



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MARRIAGE

IT is doubtful if there is anything more vital to human society than marriage. The family is the basis of society, and marriage is the basis of the family. If the marriage bond be loose, both family and society will suffer. If the marriage bond be firm, both family and society will be secure. History attests that wherever and whenever marriage has been regarded lightly by a people disaster has followed.

The home is the heart of the nation. Citizenship and patriotism depend on the character of the home. Men who have good homes and beloved families will serve well and loyally the country which protects them. The home will be right, ordinarily, if the marriage bond be right and respected.

People sometimes ask why the Catholic Church puts so much importance on marriage. It is because Christ has set her the example. Rather, it is because she is carrying out His solemn mandate in the matter. The Catholic Church did not institute Christian marriage. Christian marriage is the institution of Jesus Christ Who elevated it to the dignity of a sacrament. In the design of the Creator marriage was intended as the proper means of perpetuating the human race. Originally, marriage was a perpetual bond between one man and one woman, but human license had eventually weakened it and lowered it from its high estate. Christ restored marriage to its original status, and moreover dignified it by making it a sacred rite of His holy religion.

With regard to Christian marriage the Catholic Church teaches precisely what her divine Founder taught. She is not free to alter the nature of marriage as proclaimed by

Jesus Christ. As long as the world lasts the Catholic Church will not change one essential feature of the sacrament of matrimony, regardless of what changes may be advocated or made by others.

Christ proclaimed the nature of the marriage contract but left to His Church the details pertaining to its performance. Whenever the Catholic Church legislates on marriage it is only with regard to the formalities which must be observed in making the contract valid. Once the Christian marriage contract is duly made the Church regards it just as Christ regarded it, and it is not in her power to regard it otherwise. Christ declared that marriage was indissoluble. His Church so declares, and will so declare until the end of time.

When Christ proclaimed marriage indissoluble, He had in mind a valid marriage. Marriage, like any civil contract, may be valid or invalid. If a civil contract be valid the courts will uphold it regardless of consequences. If a civil contract be invalid the courts will not break the contract but will declare that no contract existed. So with regard to marriage. If a marriage be validly performed the Church will uphold it in face of the whole world. But if it be not validly performed the Church will declare it null and void. In doing this she does not break the marriage bond, but proclaims that no bond existed.

WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

Marriage may be defined as a legitimate union between man and woman constituting them man and wife. By *legitimate union* is meant a union sanctioned by law, whether the law be racial, civil or ecclesiastical. The term *man and wife* signifies mutual rights of sexual intercourse, life in common, and permanent union. Sexual intercourse which does not imply life in common and permanence is not marriage but concubinage.

The marriage of an individual person of one sex to an individual person of the other sex is called monogamy. Opposed to monogamy is polygamy, the marriage of one man to several women. Polygamy debases and demoralizes woman. Monogamy is the recognized form of marriage among civilized people. The experience of mankind, the voice of nature and the institution of Jesus Christ proclaim that monogamy—the marriage of one man to one woman—is the proper form of union for man and wife. Every nation that has been Christianized recognizes and upholds monogamous marriage only.

PERMANENCY

Next in importance to the union of one man with one woman in marriage is the permanency of the union. The nature of marriage is such that temporary union is incompatible with its purpose. We must consider marriage as an institution affecting not this or that individual, but the human race. Also we must keep in mind that there is no law nor institution among mankind that does not cause some individuals pain, loss or hardship of one kind or another. If we abolish a law because of its occasional hardships or abuses, we should have to abolish every law and every institution in the world. Taxes, speed laws, health laws, etc., at times cause great inconvenience and even hardship on individuals, but the welfare of the public at large demands nevertheless that these laws be carried into effect. So with marriage, the good of mankind requires that in spite of incidental hardship the bond be permanent.

By nature man is drawn to associate sexually with woman. Nature's purpose in this union is the perpetuation of the human race. The natural and ordinary result of marriage is offspring. In exceptional cases children may not be the outcome of sex relationship, but they are the normal and ordinary consequence. Children have the natural right

to the care, protection and love of father and mother. Unless marriage be permanent children are deprived of this natural right.

If death remove either parent that is the affair of Providence. The Creator has the right to rule the world as He sees fit, and the wisdom to dispose of His creatures for their ultimate welfare. God is the Author of Nature, man is His subject and bound by nature's laws. Hence for man to deprive his children of what nature entitles them to, is the violation of nature's ordinance. A child by the devotion and sacrifice of either father or mother alone, may be reared satisfactorily, but it is ordinarily exceptional, and always there is left a rancor in the heart of the child who is deprived of either father or mother otherwise than by the hand of death.

Besides the children, the mother must be considered. A mother is not ordinarily independent and free to live her own life. Motherhood has made her responsible for those to whom she has given birth. By marriage she gave her maidenhood to her husband. That can never be restored to her. In giving that she gave what is most precious to woman. In return the man engaged to be her support and protector. Motherhood and wifedom demand permanence of the marriage bond. Civil law recognizes this indirectly, since it obliges man to supply by alimony what is renounced by divorce when for just cause the courts grant the woman a decree of separation.

No man, regarding marriage disinterestedly, would consider it otherwise than permanent. No normal man contracts marriage except with the intention of forming a lasting union. No man living but feels in his heart that the nature of marriage demands permanency. The status of wife, mother and children cry out for the lasting union of the bond of matrimony.

FAMILY DIFFICULTIES

Marriage is no exception to other states of life. In every department of life we must expect difficulties. For the sake of success in business or a profession people must patiently endure many inconveniences and frequently hardships. The home is the biggest business of life. It is worth while exercising restraint and forbearance for the sake of the family just as much and even more than for success in business. The Catholic Church recognizes all the difficulties of married life, and has provided for them by suitable remedies, but not by absolute divorce with the right to re-marry.

Divorce, with right to re-marry, has done more to break up families than all the difficulties and differences that occur in family life. Man is fickle. When he pledges his troth to be faithful to the maiden he takes in marriage he means it. But the heart of man is restless. He seeks novelty. A new face captivates him. Infatuated by a new love he not only loses his love for her to whom he pledged it, but begins to hate her because she is an obstacle to his new attraction. If there were no possibility of a new union he would dismiss from his thoughts the object of his temptation. But with the hope of a new union he seeks to break the old. He creates a condition of incompatibility which eventually leads to the severance of the marriage tie, and then hastens to form a new alliance. Little difficulties and misunderstandings which would vanish or be overcome by patience, if marriage held until death, assume larger and larger proportions where there is prospect of a new union.

For sixteen centuries there was no such thing as divorce in Christendom, and during that period people, although they had their trials then as now, lived contentedly. Single life has its difficulties as well as married life. The only way to avoid difficulties is to cease to be mortal. Every career of life has its misunderstandings and hardships and

suffering. Marriage is no exception. Married life offers no immunity from the cares, responsibilities and misunderstandings of life.

THORNS AMONG THE ROSES

Divorce does not remedy marriage ills but aggravates and multiplies them. When a man divorces his wife and marries another he persuades himself that he has found an angel and that his new life will be a path of roses. But before long he finds the thorns as before. Divorce leads to divorce. Many people live more miserably with their second mate than with their first; and yet more miserably with the third.

For Catholics the matter is settled once for all by Him Who made man. God, the Author of Nature and the Ruler of the World, has proclaimed that marriage is indissoluble. The Catholic Church is the Voice of God in the world. "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (Luke x. 16). Hence until the end of time the Catholic Church will echo the words of her divine Founder:

"From the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother; and shall cleave to his wife. And they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. . . . Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark x. 6-12).

This is the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is also the teaching of the Church of Christ, and moreover will be her teaching on marriage to the end of time.

II

MARRIAGE AND ANNULMENT

IT is safe to say that the most important natural institution for human welfare is marriage. A nation is vigorous in proportion to the correctness of its family life; and proper family life depends in great part on the character of marriage. Not only the nation as a whole, but its individual members, as well, are affected vitally by the nature of marriage.

People whose home life is satisfactory not only love home but country also. Men and youths whose family life is attractive will defend home and country at all cost. Those whose home is congenial will be concerned for the government which safeguards the home. Thus it is that the home makes patriots; and patriotism is the best defense of country. It is the home that attaches people to country and government. It is home welfare that gives man inspiration to achieve and to endure. It is to make the home ever better that urges man to worthy ambition. The home accordingly is a most important factor in individual and national life.

It is common sense therefore to take every right means in order to maintain the home in its integrity. A business man makes many personal sacrifices for the success of his business, whatever it may be. The biggest business of life is the family. No matter what success one may have in trade, in society, or in public office, if family life is not right, one has not made a success of life. On the other hand, if one's family life is what it should be, one is able to face the vicissitudes of life in a spirit of buoyancy, which if it does not ensure material success at least affords strength and courage to cope with every obstacle.

The experience of mankind as well as the voice of na-

ture proclaims that monogamy, the marriage of one man to one woman, is the proper form of union for man and wife. It is common sense therefore to uphold monogamy. And this is what the Catholic Church has done from the beginning. Through her teaching and efforts every country which has been Christianized recognizes monogamous marriage only. At times polygamy has been the greatest obstacle to her missionary efforts.

In considering marriage we must keep in mind the unique character of the contract, which concerns not only the man and woman who make it, but also the family which ordinarily results from it, and society, of which the family is an essential factor. Contracts which concern only those who make them may or may not be rescinded by mutual consent, but marriage concerns others besides the individuals who form the contracting parties. It is because matrimony affects vitally the family and society that nature has dictated the permanence of the bond.

Married life offers no immunity to the cares, responsibilities and misunderstandings of life. Divorce does not remedy marriage evils but multiplies them. Permanency of the marriage bond has undoubtedly many undesirable consequences, but they are as nothing compared with the dreadful evils of divorce with re-marriage. The Church legislates for mankind. Every legislation which makes for the general good, occasions hardship in individual cases. The pure-food law may at times cause severe and unmerited loss to an individual concern or person but it safeguards the people.

In military affairs the interests of the individual soldier must be subordinated to those of the army. In matters of health the individual must be secondary to the public, as we see when a person is quarantined or otherwise inconvenienced for the sake of the general good. The marriage of one to one, and the permanence of the bond until death

severs it, may cause individual hardship in specific cases. That is the nature of everything human. But it can be truly said that polygamy and divorce have wrought far more suffering on mankind than has monogamous and permanent marriage.

The mistake that many make is to think that marriage changes people's nature, and that in matrimony one must not expect the difficulties inherent in every department of life. If a man or woman have an affinity outside wedlock it is only natural that marriage relations will become strained. A man or woman in love with another does not have to look far or long to find incompatibility. But if they know that no future marriage is possible during the lifetime of either, they bear patiently the shortcomings of each other and eventually become congenial or at least bearable to each other.

Those who plead hardship or incompatibility as cause for divorce act differently towards marriage from what they do to everything else in life. Suppose one pleaded hardships as a cause for not keeping one's word of honor. Yet no word of honor equals the marriage vow. Suppose one pleaded hardship for not paying the income tax!

VALID CONTRACT

In view of the fact that the Catholic Church proclaims the indissolubility of the marriage bond, how explain the re-marriage of Catholics while both parties to a former union are living? In all such cases the Church does not sever the marriage bond, but proclaims that a bond never really existed. The marriage bond is a serious and sacred tie. To be valid it must conform to the requirements of nature and law. Whenever the Church examines into a marriage, it is not with a view to dissolving it, but only of learning whether or not its bond was valid.

A contract must be entered into freely. If force or fear be employed in a civil contract, it is null. Under intimidation a person may do almost anything. The Church decrees that both parties to the marriage contract must be free. If it can be established that the marriage was forced by violence or unlawful threats, it is no marriage.

When the Roman Rota declared that the Marlborough-Vanderbilt marriage was null and void because of coercion, unusual interest and considerable misunderstanding was created. Annulment is not divorce. Divorce is the dissolution of the marriage bond. Annulment is the declaration that no such bond existed. The Catholic Church in the case of a consummated Christian marriage, has never granted a divorce with right to re-marry. It has declared many annulments of marriages. Every time a civil court sets aside a contract by declaring it null and void, it pronounces an annulment. The civil court does not break a contract by annulling it but simply affirms that the agreement in question was no contract at all.

Marriage is a contract. Christ elevated the Christian marriage contract to the dignity of a Sacrament but it remains essentially a contract. By the marriage ceremony the contracting parties mutually dispose of what is of most consequence to each, namely their own persons. The very nature of a contract requires that what one disposes of must be one's own, and that one must be free to dispose of it or to retain it.

A lack of free consent would invalidate a marriage even if the Catholic Church never existed. Natural justice and natural law demand that a person be free in executing a contract. In any civilized country, if a person were coerced into signing a civil contract, as Consuelo Vanderbilt was coerced in her marriage contract, the courts would nullify it.

It may seem to some people that to annul a marriage because of the absence of free consent is to open the door

to laxity. But it must be remembered that the existence of coercion must be proved beyond a shadow of doubt. The testimony of the coerced party must be established by unquestionable corroboration. Annulment, far from letting down the bars of Christian marriage, makes stronger than ever the barrier to divorce. The Church which has annulled the marriage bond of Marlborough's invalid marriage suffered the loss of England to the Faith rather than break the bond of the valid marriage of her king, Henry VIII.

III

DIVORCE

RECENTLY a gentleman said to me: "Why is it that your Church, being so strict about divorce, is not stricter about people getting married?" I told him that he would never ask that question if he had ever tried to get married to a Catholic. I then showed him that the Church takes such precautions with marriage that some criticize her for making it too difficult. She takes all this care, and makes her children take it, because marriage is the most consequential contract a human being can make. However, in spite of all her pains and precaution, people do at times make unfortunate marriages.

Most marriage trouble in our day comes about from hasty marriages. Moreover, many of the young people, especially in cities, are altogether unqualified for the duties and exigencies of married life. As young women and young men pass you on the street, and you notice their frivolousness and license you wonder what sort of parents they can become. Young women are almost disguised by artificial devices to beautify themselves; and young men seem to disregard all the proprieties in their association with them. These are the young folks who are to become husband and wife, father and mother. Is it any wonder that in so many cases marriages, after the first few months, settles down to a condition of mere tolerance? Love seems to have departed. Rather it was really never there. It was just sex attraction of the animal sort, which is fickle and selfish. Hence, after marriage, when familiarity discloses the artifices of courtship, and each knows the other for what she or he is, misunderstandings begin.

Incompatibility is a modern matrimonial ailment, due to the fact that it may open the door to a new alliance.

When courting, and up to the marriage day, both parties were very compatible. It is true that in the intimate nature of married life, one's defects stand out in a particularly annoying manner. But married life, just as every other career of life, calls for patience and self-restraint.

If, however, in spite of everything, the marriage situation becomes intolerable, as it does sometimes, the Church advises separation rather than to live in sin, for sin it is to live in animosity and at cross-purposes. But separation is advisable only as the very last resort, and with every precaution for the well-being of the children. But although the Church permits separation in extreme cases she never sanctions divorce with right to re-marry.

ORIGIN OF DIVORCE

Until the Protestant Reformation there was no such thing as divorce in Christendom. Luther granted the first divorce to a prince who supported his innovation. Henry VIII in effect granted himself a divorce, in order to marry his wife's maid. Gradually a new doctrine of divorce crept in by interpreting Christ's words permitting separation to mean divorce with right to re-marry. But Christ Himself plainly declared that although separation was lawful under certain circumstances divorce with right to re-marry was never lawful. Here are His words: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery" (Luke xvi. 18). It would be impossible to word legislation more unequivocally than that.

It is a matter of gratification to Catholics to observe that many who are not of the Catholic Faith are beginning to recognize that her position on marriage and divorce is the only right one. Recently a Protestant organization has been formed in order to stem the tide of evil resulting from the

moral cancer of divorce. The New York *Times* published the following news item:

"The Sanctity of Marriage Association launched a movement to bar absolutely the marriage of divorced persons in the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Sanctity of Marriage Association is headed by the Rev. Dr. Milo H. Gates, vicar of the Chapel of the Intercession, Trinity Parish; and its Executive Committee includes, among others, Bishop William T. Manning, Bishop Frederick Burgess of Long Island and Bishop Paul Matthews of New Jersey.

"The proposed law is:

"No minister, knowingly after due inquiry, shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been or is the husband or the wife of any person living from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage. Nor shall it be lawful for any member of this Church to enter upon a marriage when either of the contracting parties is the husband or the wife of any other person then living from whom he or she has been divorced for any cause arising after marriage.

"The association gives the following reasons why in its judgment the one 'exception' should be repealed:

"Because nowhere in the New Testament is there a single word in support of re-marriage of either party after 'putting away' during the lifetime of the other.

"Because nowhere either in the Old or the New Testament is there any assumption, much less assertion, of the modern theory that adultery, or any other sin, *ipso facto*, dissolves a marriage, which is not a mere contract but a state or condition.

"Because nowhere in the history of the first three centuries, when the Church was suffering persecution and was free from all entanglements with the State, can

there be found a single author who interprets the exceptive clauses of St. Matthew about 'putting away' as reason for re-marriage during the life of the other party.

"Because nowhere since the fourth century, in the whole Western Church, down to the year 1868 was there any canonical allowance for the re-marriage of the so-called 'innocent party.'

"Because, in accordance with Our Lord's pragmatic test, 'by their fruits ye shall know them,' the census reports for the United States, with their forty-eight codes and fifty-two causes for sundering the bond, show the most rapid increase of divorces of any country, pagan or Christian, in the world."

MARRIAGE REGULATIONS

It is a matter of experience that some Catholics who have been married have had the marriage set aside and have re-married. How explain this in view of the Catholic doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage? To understand this we need to know just what constitutes a marriage. It may be said at the outset that among Christians no consummated valid marriage has ever been annulled, and never can be annulled.

Christ recalled and declared the nature of marriage, but left to His Church the regulation of everything else pertaining to it. The Church then decrees how this marriage contract is to be executed. If one makes a civil contract, and it is not done legally, it is null and void before the law. The Church decrees beforehand how the marriage contract must be made, and that only persons who are marriageable may become parties to the contract. She states beforehand the form of the marriage ceremony, and the class of people who are marriageable, and declares solemnly that any contract in violation of these decrees is not a valid marriage.

This power of legislating on the formalities of the marriage ceremony was given to the Church by Christ Himself: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 18).

Whenever, therefore, you hear of Catholics having their marriage set aside and re-marrying, you will know that there was, in the case in question, no valid previous marriage. A so-called Catholic divorce, is no divorce at all, but a declaration that there was no marriage from the beginning. Persons who have their marriage set aside may have very good reasons for not letting the public know why it was done. The Church never informs the public except the case be public, and the reasons for the so-called divorce have been made known by the parties to the divorce.

In business contracts, in government contracts, in army enlistment, and in every other civil matter, the parties to a contract are held to it, regardless of hardship or disillusionment. A clerk in a store does not always find things congenial or satisfactory, but nevertheless continues at work. A young man may enlist in the army or navy and find, after he has signed, that his companions or superior officers or the work is not compatible. But he is held to his enlistment nevertheless. The marriage bond is more binding than enlistment.

MODERN LEPROSY

Before this modern leprosy of divorce became prevalent, people had their difficulties in married life just as they have now. But because divorce was unheard of, they made up their differences and lived on if not happily, at least satisfactorily.

It cannot be said too plainly that marriage does not change one's nature. What one is before marriage that one will be after marriage. For this reason the Church advises

her children to proceed carefully in this matter. Nowadays young people rush into marriage without the consideration that they would exercise in buying a house or an automobile. Then they wonder that they are not suited to each other! They are caught by some superficial or artificial attraction, and without knowing the real person at all take a partner for life. They then blame marriage or the Church for what they themselves are responsible.

Christ came not to remove the cross but to help us carry it. Married life has its cross, as single life has. Nothing so unites a family and makes its members so devoted to one another as the mutual bearing of its hardships and mutual consideration. Married life calls for the exercise of virtue as well as does single life. Divorce proclaims that separation and re-marriage must take the place of the Christian virtues of patience and forbearance. If the history of mankind teaches any lesson unmistakably it is that divorce is the moral cancer of society, of the family, and of the individual. After all, man cannot improve on God.

IV

SEX MATTERS

THE dominant passion of mankind is that which relates to sex. The Author of Nature implanted the sex instinct in man in order to assure the perpetuation of the human race. Like every human instinct the sex impulse must be under the control of reason. Some people assert that since the sex impulse is natural it should be given free rein. They say: "Why are our tendencies given us if not to follow?"

The drunkard follows his tendencies, and it lowers him to the level of the beast. The dope-fiend follows his tendencies, and it makes him a human wreck. The thief follows his tendencies, and it puts him behind prison bars. The greatest fallacy ever uttered is that we should follow, rather than control, our impulses. Giving way to anger makes a man temporarily insane. Indulging the appetite for food without restraint makes dyspeptics and invalids. No! Man was given reason to rule his animal tendencies, and every time that reason gives way to passion, nature exacts a heavy toll. Our hospitals, prisons, and insane asylums are filled with the victims of uncontrolled tendencies and passions.

SELF-CONTROL

In no career of life may we be controlled by our feelings. The merchant must attend to business although he may feel a strong desire for rest or entertainment. The professional man must be affable when his inclinations

prompt him to be indignant or sharp. No one can remain in good society unless he control his impulses in conformity with the social code.

Sex impulse, above all, requires rational control or it will hurl a man over a precipice. There are more disasters, diseases, tragedies and wrecks from uncontrolled sex impulses than from any other one cause. If sex impulse be properly controlled it means that man's life generally will be rightly regulated. For control of the dominant passion indicates control of the lesser ones. Passion controlled is like a spirited horse under firm rein. But passion uncontrolled is like a fiery steed under loose rein. Restraint is the law of life. The successful athlete must restrain himself in many ways. The successful statesman must restrain his sentiments. The successful leader of men must restrain his likes and dislikes.

In every normal person there is a conflict between rational and animal nature. We approve of what is good but find ourselves drawn to evil. So great a saint as the Apostle Paul found this conflict in himself between soul and body. Chesterton has said that if Revelation did not teach the fact of original sin man would have to invent some such doctrine to explain the conflict in human nature.

Man is the only being in which there is internal conflict. Animals have external foes. Man's greatest foe is within. His greatest battles are with himself. He must either master his passions or become their slave. There is no slavery like that forged by evil habits, as witness the drug-addict or the victim of sex offenses. It is doubtless an effort at times to control our passions, but the consequence of not controlling them is more painful than the effort to control. An act repeated generates a tendency. A tendency unchecked forms a habit. A habit forges the chains of slavery. There is no misery on earth comparable to that of the victim of uncontrolled sex impulse.

CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES

It is often asked why the Catholic Church lays such stress on purity of morals. It is because, with the wisdom of God, she knows that nothing makes for personal and social welfare so much as purity of mind and body. This calls for self-mastery or self-denial. Christ proclaimed: "If any man will be My disciple let him deny himself" (Luke ix. 23). Self-denial is the fundamental principle of the Christian life. Self-control in sex matters is the key to peace, welfare and salvation. Many crimes are connected, either directly or indirectly, with sex offenses. Lying, theft, jealousy, revenge, murder, are often directly or indirectly associated with sex sins. In brief, unless man control sex, sex will control him; and the sex-controlled man is the most miserable slave on earth.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that the Church of God so carefully directs and safeguards her children with regard to sex and all that it implies. We should rather expect a divine religion to teach mankind the most effective way of controlling the dominant passion, and making it serve the beneficial and salutary purpose which the Author of Nature intends.

We hear a great deal at present about psychology and mental suggestion. Because the Church of Christ is divine she knows the soul of man without the science of psychology. She is taught of God and guided by the Holy Spirit. Psychology affirms that mental suggestion has a strong, sometimes an overpowering, influence on bodily action. The Church of Christ, as a true psychologist, guards her children against mental suggestion relative to sex matters. She forbids immoral thoughts and dangerous occasions of sin. She knows that immoral thoughts ordinarily beget immoral deeds. In this she is voicing the teaching of Christ Who said: "For from within out of the heart of

men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders" (Mark vii. 21).

In matters of sex there is an intimate relation between thought and deed. When therefore the Catholic Church declares that man's thoughts must be clean she is not only proclaiming what Christ explicitly taught but is also prescribing what psychology affirms to be the best possible means of maintaining purity of life. It is almost impossible to harbor lustful thoughts or to frequent dangerous occasions without falling into lustful deeds. Dangerous occasions engender bad thoughts. Bad thoughts tend to bad deeds. The Church therefore in forbidding dangerous occasions and impure thoughts strikes at the very root of sex offenses. Like a wise and skilled physician, she does not limit her prescriptions to symptoms of disease, but seeks their root and applies the remedy there. Christ, the greatest of psychologists, declared: "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8).

SEX INSTRUCTION

It has always been a problem with good people, what policy to pursue with regard to sex instruction. Modesty is the guardian of purity. Modest people are ordinarily pure in thought and deed. Knowledge of evil does not keep people from evil. Those who know most about the evil consequences of impurity frequently become the worst victims of the vice of impurity. Perhaps never before in the history of mankind was there so much sex instruction as at present, and never before were there so many victims of the vice of impurity. Our predecessors got along without all the sex instruction that is now ruining so many under pretext of educating them. The purest and healthiest nations of the world have been those least acquainted with sex knowledge. There is a natural instinct in this matter which dictates

reserve. A few words of discreet instruction from the proper persons at the right time is all that is necessary for sexual guidance.

The policy of the Church of Christ has always been to safeguard purity by upholding lofty ideals and virtuous principles. But above all the Catholic Church develops pure generations by having her children realize that impurity is a sin. It is forbidden by Almighty God. That is the great and sufficient reason for avoiding sex offenses.

In order to safeguard persons against smallpox, it is not necessary to familiarize them with the symptoms of the dread disease. The health officers put up a warning sign and people keep away from the scourge. God, the highest authority, labels impurity a sin, and declares that the impure shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. That is more effective against sex offense than all the means devised by man. Moreover in order to help her children to be pure the Church nourishes them with the grace-giving sacraments established by her divine Founder. It is impossible to partake frequently and worthily of the sacraments and become a victim of sex-domination.

Unfortunately many of the youth of today are taught that they are but high-grade animals. God has no part in their lives. They are a law unto themselves. We see the result only too clearly and painfully. These misguided ones are repeating the sentiments of the wicked of old as recorded in Scripture: "The time of our life is short . . . come therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present . . . let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered: let no meadow escape our riot. . . . Let our strength be the law of justice. . . . These things they thought, and were deceived: for their own wickedness blinded them" (Wisdom ii. 1, 6, 8, 11, 21). Too late did these victims of vice discover their error. The Bible gives us their words of despair: "We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and

destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known . . . but we are consumed in our wickedness. Such things the sinners said in hell" (Wisdom v. 7, 13, 14).

In contrast to those who were a law to themselves defying God's will, is the end of those who reverenced the law of God: "But the just shall live forevermore: and their reward is with the Lord . . . therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty from the hand of the Lord" (Wisdom v. 16, 17). "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8).

BIRTH CONTROL

BIRTH control was termed by Theodore Roosevelt race-suicide. The human race has a life as well as the individual. If birth control were practised universally the human race would perish. In sections of our own country where birth control has been in vogue the people have died out and given place to strangers. Birth control is nature perversion. It employs natural faculties in a way not only not intended by nature but contrary to nature's purposes. It defeats the plan of the Author of Nature as far as the creature can interfere with the plans of the Creator.

When we speak of birth control we mean artificial interference with the processes of nature. There is birth control and birth control. Persons who do not marry limit births. Married persons who practise self-control in sexual relations limit births. But the term birth control is not applied to either of these classes. The birth control which nature condemns is the use of a natural faculty contrary to nature's purposes.

An example may enable us to understand the unnaturalness of birth control. If a person were to eat just for the gratification of eating, and would not allow the food to pass into the stomach but would eject it in some way, he would soon starve to death. He would be guilty of suicide. This is just what birth control tends to do to the human race by contraceptive methods.

NATURE PERVERSION

Birth control by the use of contraceptives is evil because it is nature perversion. Unmarried adults limit birth sup-

ply by refraining from marriage; which is their privilege. A person is free to make a contract but not free to play fast and loose with it when made. It may be objected that births are limited just as much by persons not marrying as by birth control in marriage. This is true, but while it is criminal to violate the nature of a contract it is not criminal to abstain from making a contract.

It may further be objected that married persons who practise self-control limit offspring. This is likewise true, but it is one thing to wreck an automobile while on a joy-ride, violating the law; quite another thing to have it wrecked while driving carefully and observing the law. The joy-rider is a criminal, not so the careful driver, even though the consequence in both cases be the same.

Nature will take care of the perpetuation of the human race, but this does not lessen the guilt of those who pervert nature. Birth control is wrong in itself, even if detriment never followed; just as stealing is wrong even though it should not absolutely ruin the victim.

Some defend birth control by saying that their purpose is not to prevent offspring but to limit the number to one or two. If a thing is evil it is not changed by more or less. It is wrong to steal whether the sum be two hundred dollars or two hundred thousand dollars. Birth control is a perversion of nature and immoral whether it be practised once or often.

THE FRUITS OF EVIL

The only reason why birth control does not actually destroy the human race is because nature destroys birth controllers. Prof. S. J. Holmes, of the University of California, says: "Intelligence has outwitted nature in the matter of regulating the birth supply, but nature gets her revenge by extinguishing her adversary." This is why Roosevelt termed birth control race-suicide. Prof. Holmes, as we

have seen, called birth controllers the enemies or adversaries of nature. Birth control is perversion of nature, it is a sin against nature, and in the end meets with dreadful penalties.

Nature attaches gratification to certain natural functions in order to assure their exercise. Eating, which is necessary to sustain life, gratifies the palate. Bodily exercise gives physical and mental exhilaration. Sleep is grateful to tired minds and bodies. If sleep, exercise and eating were not associated with pleasure, people might so neglect themselves that before they were conscious of the neglect they might collapse beyond restoration. So with regard to the sexual act whose natural purpose is to perpetuate the life of the race. Nature has attached a gratification to it in order to assure its exercise.

The responsibilities of bringing up children and providing for them are so many and great, that unless the sex urge strongly impelled people to the procreative act no children would be born into the world, and the human race would perish. Even as it is there are not a few people of both sexes who have an aversion to cohabitation. Unless nature powerfully attracted the sexes to intimate relationship the family would die out. A wise Creator has wisely provided for the perpetuation of mankind.

Here the birth controllers may say that they, too, advocate the perpetuation of the race but in a way that will be for its betterment. They affirm that fewer children mean a better world. They argue that they can provide nicely for one or two children but not for more. In certain parts of New England this plan was put into operation, with the result that soon there were few or no descendants of those who adopted it.

Some advocates of birth control affirm that what they intend is a better race. But if a man wants a better automobile he may not violate the laws of the State or of property in order to get it. **There are other ways of better-**

ing one's condition than by breaking the law. The thief wants better things than he has. That does not justify him in stealing.

BIRTH CONTROL AND POVERTY

Others plead poverty as a reason for birth control. But it is not the poor that practise this vice but the rich mainly. Birth controllers maintain that they can do more for their children if they be few in number. So could a man do more to dress his family if he refused to pay his bills. Nature prompts all mankind to better their condition, but by legitimate means. There are other ways of bettering offspring than by violating nature's laws.

Moreover the pampered children of birth controllers are not as a rule superior nor equal to children of large families. Frequently the pampered children of birth controllers turn out to be social parasites, or worthless degenerates, to the sorrow and often to the mortal anguish of their parents. These spoiled children are not able to compete with the hardy offspring of large families. Sir John Robertson, M.D., a high authority in the matter, says: "It is very questionable whether the members of large families do not make better citizens than the members of families of one or two only. . . . The laborer with a family of five or six children is on the whole better off and lives a happier life than the laborer without a family or with a family of one or two only" (Official Reports of the City of Birmingham, England, 1924). A child in a large family receives a training in self-reliance, unselfishness and manliness which the offspring of birth controllers seldom or never acquire. But apart from all this, even if children were bettered by the practice of this unnatural vice by their parents, it would be the same as enriching them by unlawful means. No honorable man wants to be made wealthier by crime.

A BETTER HUMAN RACE

Some people seek to justify birth control by saying that they desire to better the human race. Fewer but better children make for a better world, they argue. Birth controllers are not solicitous for the race but for their own comfort and welfare. They are shirkers. They know that birth control instead of making the race better makes it disappear. A community which limits offspring to one or two children will in a few generations completely vanish. As Prof. Holmes has said, nature takes her revenge on birth controllers by destroying them. Advocates of birth control on the plea of bettering the race are refuted by nature herself.

The arguments of birth controllers are camouflage. Instead of admitting that they are practising this vice in order to serve their own pleasure and immediate advantage, they try to throw dust into the eyes of people by affirming that they are solicitous for others. Instead of being willing to make the sacrifices and efforts required to bring up the children whom nature would ordinarily give them, they pervert nature. They are not good sports. They do not play the game fair. They want all the thrills but none of the knocks of the game.

LEGITIMATE RESTRICTION

Instead of birth control there is a legitimate way of restricting birth, and that is by self-control, which people must practise in every other sphere of life. If a man wants an automobile, and is not willing to pay for it, he goes without. By birth control principles he would violate the law to get it.

Birth control degrades those who practise it. No less an authority than Dr. Howard A. Kelly, professor of gynecology, Johns Hopkins University, says: "All meddling with

sex relations to secure facultative sterility degrades the wife to the level of a prostitute. . . . There is no right or decent way of controlling births but by total abstinence" (*Harper's Weekly*, October 16, 1916). Birth controllers in their sane moments despise themselves. Some may be dead to shame in this matter, but that only makes them more degraded. Prof. Paul Bureau, University of Paris, states: "Whether he likes it or not, every adult who claims the right to unfruitful sexual relationships and that the sexual power with which he is endowed is for his own pleasure and enjoyment, spreads through society the seeds of disintegration and disorder" (*L'Indiscipline des Moeurs*, 1924).

Self-control, not birth control, needs to be inculcated. Dr. Paul Dubois, University of Berne, affirms: "There are more neurastheniacs among those who give free-rein to their passions than among those who know how to escape the yoke of animality."

CATHOLIC VIEWPOINT

Catholics refuse to practise birth control because God condemns it. Birth control is a deadly sin. A Catholic cannot receive the Sacraments of the Church and practise this unnatural vice. The Church condemns it because nature and God condemn it. The Bible tells us that for committing this sin Onan was struck dead: "The Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing" (Gen. xxxviii. 10). God's laws are not subject to man's approval or pleasure. Nature's laws are God's laws.

At times it may be a hardship to observe God's laws with regard to marriage. But hardship does not excuse from observance of the State law. Taxes are a hardship. Every law at times is burdensome. We have to make sacrifices and exercise restraint in every department of life. Marriage is no exception.

Because birth controllers are not punished instantly it does not mean that they go free. Nature, as well as God, has her own time and way of vindicating herself. We may defy God if we will. He made us free. He will not physically force us to serve Him. But we violate His law at our own peril. We never know how or when He will deal with those who do not respect His authority.

Duty to the State often requires that we risk health, possessions, and even life. It was not agreeable to pay war taxes, nor to go over-seas to face deadly gas and shells, nor to go "over the top" on the battle line. But duty to country demanded this. We are more the subjects of God than of the State. At times God's service may require the sacrifice of fortune, health or life. But Christ has said: "He that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels: and then will He render to every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 25-27).

But, in the words of Scripture, "The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God" (Psalm xiii. 1). Today there are not a few who play fast and loose with nature as if there were no God. But God will not be mocked. In His own time and way He will assert His authority. Blessed shall we be, if when we meet God face to face, it will be to hear from Him the words of welcome which will make us His beloved children forever in the kingdom He has prepared for them that love Him. If we are faithful subjects of God here, we shall be His beloved children hereafter. Obedience to God's law is the title to everlasting membership in the divine family.

